


"Seeing this as they are..."




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- The Pali statement is **"yathā bhūtam pajānāti"**
- Common translation **"seeing things as they are"** = **existential thinking**
- Bhante translated: **"understanding of how things come to be"**



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We may compare this to another well-known statement, connected with a person called Bahiya Dharuciriya. This statement: *“diṭṭhe diṭṭhamattarā bhavissati”* is often translated as, **in the seen there is only the seeing**, which is understood as **“looking at something, without thinking about it.”** This interpretation, however, makes it look like, “guarding the senses” (*indriya-samvara*).

Our interpretation, however, is: “focusing attention on the **process of seeing** instead of looking at **the object that is seen.**” This means, becoming aware of the **process of perception**, rather than the **object perceived**. This change in perception is what we call **apperception**.


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PROCESS OF EXPERIENCE



❖ Experience is a Chain-Reaction:

Pañca-khandha

```

graph TD
    Stimulus[STIMULUS] --> Perception[PERCEPTION ("Viññāna")]
    Perception --> Cognitive[COGNITIVE PROCESS ("Mano")]
    Cognitive --> Affective[AFFECTIVE PROCESS ("Citta")]
    Affective --> Volition[VOLITION ("Cetanā")]
    Volition --> Action[ACTION ("Kamma")]
    Action --> Consequence[CONSEQUENCE ("Vipāka")]
    Consequence --> Feedback[FEEDBACK]
    Feedback --> Stimulus
    
    Perception --- PerceptionText[CONCEPTION]
    Cognitive --- CognitiveText[Re-cognition (dhamma)]
    Affective --- AffectiveText[EMOTION]
    AffectiveText --- AffectiveTextSub[Affection (mood / temperament)]
    
```

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What is experience?

First let us see ourselves as **organisms in an environment**. The organism is a biophysical energy system very much like a machine. There are five senses in the body consisting of the eyes, ears, the nose, tongue and the entire body. When this organism is placed in an environment, the senses are stimulated by the environment, and the organism reacts to the stimulus.

Perception is the reaction of the organism to stimulation of the senses, by the environment. An **experience** is a product of this process of perception.



WHO ARE WE ?




❖ We are **Organisms** in an Environment

1. **METABOLISM :**
Life sustaining process;


2. **CONSCIOUSNESS :**
Experiencing the Environment through 5 physiological senses;

- SIGHT
- HEARING
- SMELL
- TASTE
- TOUCH






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The reaction of the organism is a **chain reaction** that takes the form of a **series of reactions**. The first reaction is **perception** such as seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching. What is perceived is carried to the brain by nerves, and the thinking part of the brain, called the cerebral cortex, or neocortex, gives meaning to what is perceived by the senses. This meaning is a **concept** about the **percept**. This giving meaning or **conception** is called **cognition**.

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PROCESS OF EXPERIENCE




❖ Experience is a Chain-Reaction:


```

            graph TD
                P["PERCEPTION  
(\"Viññāna\")"] --> CP["COGNITIVE PROCESS  
(\"Mano\")"]
                CP --> AP["AFFECTIVE PROCESS  
(\"Citta\")"]
                P -.->|Conception Papanca| CM["Categorized Memory of Fluid Past"]
                CM -.->|Re-cognition| CP
                AP --> C["Concept  
Concept of an entity identified as \"DOG\" (Nāma)"]
                MI["Mental Image (Rūpa)"] --- AP
                
```

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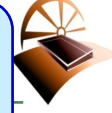


Dhamma really means “**experience**,” or even better, it is the process of experiencing. In more detail, experience is the perceptual and conceptual **process** of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, thinking and feeling. The **concept** “existence” is a **product** of the process of experiencing, and therefore **experience precedes existence**. To **exist** is to occupy space and time. Therefore **space and time** are **products** of experience.

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SIX SENSUAL ROOTS (*Salāyatana*)



Cognitive Process

Mano

Categorized Identity
Dhamma
Re-cognition

PERCEPTION
What was perceived thru the sense organs

CONCEPTION
What was recognized (identified) by categorization of what was perceived

Cakkhu
Reflected light falling on my eyes
Rūpa
Sight

Ghāna
Odor reaching my nose
Gandha
Smell

Jivhā
Flavour reaching my tongue
Rasa
Taste

Sadda
Sound
Phoṭṭhabba
Touch

Sota
Air vibration reaching my ears

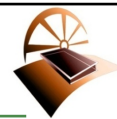
Kāya
Tangibles stimulating touch receptors

Re-cognition

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Perception develops into Cognition (phassa)

8. What is perceived through the **five senses** (*pañca indriya*) is brought to the thinking brain or **cerebral cortex** (*mano*), which uses rational thought and memory to give meaning to what was perceived. This way a **percept** (*viññāṇa*) is transformed into a **concept** (*dhamma*). Through this process of conception an **entity** in the form of an **image** (*rūpa*) is created with an **identity** in the form of a **name** (*nāma*). This way a world made of **Six Sensual Realms** (*saḷāyatana*): of **vision, sound, smell, taste, touch, and concepts** (*dhamma*) comes into being.



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The paradigm shift (nirodha samāpatti)

To focus on the **object** perceived is to become aware of the object perceived as existing, while the **subject** that perceives the object is also seen to exist. The subject is **personalized** as "mine," thus creating a sense of "I" or "self" (*etan mama, eso hamasmī, eso me attati*). This way of thinking is what we call **existential thinking**.

Instead of thinking existentially this way, if one focuses attention on the process of perception and not on the object perceived, then one sees that it is the process of perception that creates the object as well as the subject. The existence of the subject and the object is seen as an **appearance** and not a **reality**. It then is an illusion or a delusion; an illusion being a perceptual fallacy, while a **delusion** is a conceptual fallacy. This kind of thinking where the focus is on the experience of perception, rather than the subject or object, is called **experiential thinking**.

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Dichotomy of Experience

- Experience arises dependent on the presence of necessary conditions:

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What is "Truth"

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If truth is one, and no second exists
Debates will never arise among folk
A variety of truths they themselves do form
Gurus therefore never speak of one truth
Ekaṃ hi saccaṃ na dutiyamatthi
Yasmiṃ pajā no vivade pajānaṃ,
Nānā te saccāni sayāṃ thunanti
Tasmā na ekaṃ samanā vadanti

Never was there a variety of truths
Other than sensations always in the world
Creating views using speculative logic
They speak of a duality: falsehood and truth
Na heva saccāni bahuni nānā
Aññātra saññāya niccāni loke,
Takkañca diṭṭhisu kapappayitvā
Saccaṃ musāti dvayadhammāhu

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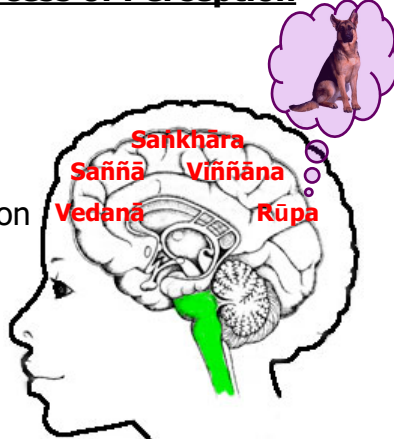


THE PROCESS OF PERCEPTION




Pañca-khandha (traditionally “the 5 aggregates”)
The 5 Constituents of the Process of Perception


- Vedanā** – Feeling
- Saññā** – Sensation
- Saṅkhāra** – Mental Construction
- Viññāna** – Perception
- Rūpa** – Mental Image



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FALLACY



❖ There are 2 types of Fallacy:

- 1. Perceptual Fallacy – ILLUSION**
 - Caused by cognition of sensory stimulus
 - Affecting our perception of sensory stimulus
- 2. Conceptual Fallacy – DELUSION**
 - Caused by affective (emotional) association or interpretation of perceptions with our memory, imagination & expectation
 - Leading to mental proliferation
 - Affecting our concept of reality

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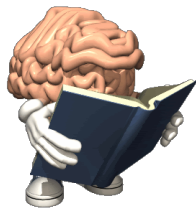


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In other words, the object perceived is not a **reality** but an **illusion or delusion**. An illusion is a **perceptual fallacy**, and a delusion is a **conceptual fallacy**. The object perceived is seen as a mental image (*rūpa*), like a picture taken by a camera. The mental image is formed by the process of construction (*sankhāra*) the colours seen are the sensations (*saññā*), which are felt as pleasant or unpleasant (*vedanā*). The images are identified as objects (*viññāṇa*) by giving them names (*nāma*).

This transformation of thinking is the **paradigm shift** from **existential** thinking to **experiential** thinking. Then there is neither subject nor object nor emotional relationship with its insecurity and suffering. There is only the process of perception, tranquility and peace of mind. This is how one **Awakens from the dream of existence**. In so doing all suffering comes to an end.



MENTAL FILTERS



UNCONSCIOUS MENTAL CONDITIONING



OUR MIND'S FILTER



1. Our 5 sense organs continuously sense and transmit to the **brain** enormous amounts of sensory information of stimulations from our environment;
2. Our **conscious mind** (cognitive process) is not capable of processing every single stimulus that the brain receives from the sense organs;
3. Our conscious mind can only pay attention to 3 or 4 tasks "simultaneously", but can only truly focus on one single task at any moment in time;

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OUR MIND'S FILTER



4. Our conscious mind copes with this by applying **filters** to "simplify" or to make sense ("*rationalize*") of the world around us by:
 - ① **Generalization** – grouping similar experiences as the "same" experience;
 - ② **Deletion** – ignoring or leaving out details or a portion of the experience;
 - ③ **Distortion** – inaccurately representing the experience in a simplified or compromised (limiting) manner.

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